

Eco Hotels- The Crash Pad

With the holiday season quickly approaching, many individuals will consider traveling which begins the quest for lodging accommodations. The number of people traveling in December for the holidays nearly doubled last year, from 22 percent in 2011 to 40 percent in 2012. Of those travelers, 38 percent stay with family or friends, while the remaining 62 percent look to stay at vacation rentals, bed-and-breakfasts and hotels or resorts.

What factors influence where you stay while traveling? Bedding? Amenities (pool, hot tub, workout center)? Proximity to family/events? Has the idea of sustainability crossed your mind while searching for lodging?

In terms of addressing environmental concerns, the hotel industry is a huge player in the creation of adverse environmental impacts. The EPA states that the hospitality industry is the nation's fifth-largest contributor to CO2 emissions. From the first stages of construction, and throughout daily operations, hotels are significantly affecting climate change and the industry continues to fuel the growth of landfills. In the average hotel room, two pounds of waste per guest per night is produced. Aside from physical waste, hotels also generate extensive energy and water use. The hotel sector spends \$3.7 billion a year on energy, according to the American Hotel & Lodging Association while the average guest uses between

45 and 116 gallons of water per night during his or her stay.

The Crash Pad, located in Chattanooga, Tennessee, is only the fourth to obtain LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum lodging and the only hostel in this category in the United States. While officially defined as a hostel, the Crash Pad integrates elements of a boutique-styled hotel and offers three types of accommodations to best suit ones budget, travel preferences and the size of their party.

When discussing sustainability, the Crash Pad has several things to brag about. There is a green roof, solar panel installations, and the greywater from bathroom sinks is filtered and reused to fill toilet tanks for flushing. Wood from one structure that was torn down to allow room for the hostel was used to make the beds while LED lighting helps keep the lighting costs down. Also, the owners participate in the [1% for the Planet Program](#) which encourages local businesses to contribute one percent of sales to environmental groups around the world.

Chattanooga has trails to explore, a downtown to wander, many rocks to climb, and waters to paddle and the Crash Pad knows where to find all the best of each. For more information, visit <http://www.crashpadchattanooga.com/>

